depots of FCI in Kerala. As on 1.8.2007, FCI was holding adequate stock of wheat and rice in Kerala sufficient to meet two months' requirement of the State for its Public Distribution System.

However, FCI's depot at Angadipuram has not been functional for the last three years because of refusal of Railways to place wagons at this depot because of operational reasons. In order to ensure smooth functioning of Public Distribution System in the State, the wholesale PDS dealers attached to Angadipuram depot have been linked to other nearby depots of FCI.

(b) In view of reply in part (a) above, question does not arise. Further, during exigencies the General Managers, Region of FCI are already empowered to make inter-depot/district movement in case of non-availability of foodgrains at a particular depot.

Hoarding and black marketing of essential items

639. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that one major reason for short supply of essential items is hoarding and black marketing;

(b) if so, the details of number of traders trapped under the Essential Commodities Act during the last three years; and

(c) what are the future plans of Government for. stopping the hoarding and black marketing?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) The basic reason for shortages in supply of certain essential commodities is the demand and supply mismatch in respect of these commodities. The rise in demand has been on account of increase in population, increase in incomes and changes in consumption patterns. In case of certain foodstuffs, availability has been affected by shortfalls in domestic production on account of seasonal factors and simultaneous hardening of international prices, impacting their imports.

(b) Details of action taken by State/Union Territory Governments under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 during 2004, 2005 and 2006 are as under:-

Year	No. of persons arrested
2004	2401
2005	4440
2006	5421

(c) Adequate powers are vested with State/UT Governments under the Essential Commodities Act 1955 and the Prevention of Blackmarketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980 for preventing malpractices in respect of essential commodities. Directions have been given to the State/UT Governments from time to time to take necessary action under both the Acts, and to strengthen

their enforcement machinery. In the wake of rise in prices of wheat and pulses, orders were issued in August, 2006, empowering State Governments to fix stock-holding limits in respect of these two essential commodities.

Production of edible oil

640. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the production of edible oil in the country has been declining over the years;

(b) if so, the details of demand and supply of edible oil in the country during the last three years, State-wise and years-wise;

(c) the reasons for decline in production of edible oil during the said period;

(d) whether the edible oil production during the current years is likely to decline further;

(e) if so, the steps Government propose to take to increase the production of edible oil in the country; and

(f) the manner in which Government propose to protect the interest of the oilseed farmers and edible oil industry in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) No, Sir. The production/net availability of edible oils from all domestic sources has increased during the last three years from 71.40 lakh tons in 2003-04 to 83.16 lakh tons in 2005-06.

(b) and (c) According to the projections for oilseeds/edible oils made for the Tenth Five Year Plan, the annual demand/requirement of edible oils in the country in terms of consumption of edible oils based on behaviouristic approach amounted to 107.80 lakh tons, 113.00 lakh tons and 118.50 lakh tons in 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06 respectively.

Estimated domestic production/net availability and supply (from domestic and import sources) of edible oils during the last three years have been as under:-

(In lakh tonnes)

Oil Year	Net availability of edible oils from all domestic sources	Supply of edible oils from domestic and import sources
2003-04	71.40	124.30
2004-05	72.47	117.89
2005-06	83.16	126.04

State-wise data on demand/requirement and supply of edible oils is not maintained.

(d) The production/net availability of edible oils from all domestic sources has been estimated at 70.62 lakh tons during 2006-07.